

**Edgcumbe Presbyterian Church,**

**Midweek Update – July 5, 2017**

### **Challenge and Comfort**

Maybe you've heard the old saying that a preacher's job is to "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted." If that is the case, then there is plenty of material for both jobs in our worship texts this month.

I am grateful to the congregation for wrestling with one of the most difficult passages in the Bible last Sunday, Genesis 22:1-14, the story of the binding of Isaac. For me personally, this text continues to invite me into a deeper trust of God in absolutely every situation. If I want to be in a full and dynamic relationship with God at every moment, then I will let that relationship shape me in every way—in my parenting, in my daily decision-making, in what I believe is possible and impossible for me (and the people around me). Here are two examples of new questions I am asking myself since studying this text over the past week.

1. *Have I already decided what is best for my children, without God's input? Am I willing to put my children completely into God's hands?*
2. *As I grow more cynical about the political dialogue in our state and nation, I ask myself: Do I want to put my hope in a certain kind of political conversation or into the God of the universe? How would I act differently in the world if I truly believed that my hope rested in God alone?*

For me, these are rich questions that lead me to more freedom and more hope. What questions are you asking yourself today? Are they questions that lead you to hope or to despair? Feel free to write down a few questions—seeing them in print helps your mind and heart open to new answers and possibilities.

After that challenging text, we are moving this coming week to Jesus' words of comfort in Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30: "Come to me, all you who are struggling and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble." Hope to see you on Sunday!

### **Pastors' July Vacation Time**

Pastors Julie and Phil will be taking two weeks off, being gone from July 10 – July 24, which means the pastors will be at church this coming Sunday. The GebbenGreens will be visiting Phil's mom in Michigan after her knee replacement surgery and doing some camping around Minnesota.

While the Pastors are gone we are having two preachers from our congregation: Angelie Ryah on July 16 and Fred Clary on July 23. Angelie will also be leading a forum on Self-Care on July 23—look for more details soon!

### **Giving Statements**

Six-month contribution reports for donors are available for pick-up in the Narthex on Sunday. Please help us save postage and take yours home with you. Please take a few minutes to check your statement and let Lois know of any questions, changes or corrections.

### **July Bible Study Dates—July 10 & 31**

Our next Bible Study dates will be next Mondays, July 10 and July 31, both at 6:30pm at the home of the Eggerts (1868 Simpson, Falcon Hgts 55113). All are welcome and a light dinner will be served! The texts for the 10<sup>th</sup> are: Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-1112; Romans 8:1-11; and Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

### **More Outdoor Worship Services coming soon**

- **Sunday, August 6 – Outdoor worship and Pet Blessing.** Bring your critter friends to a short blessing ceremony at 10:00. Stay for the whole service if you want!
- **Sunday, September 3 – Outdoor worship and communion.** Start off your fall on the right foot and stay for the potluck lunch afterward.

### **Project Home Mission Opportunity**

Edgumbe Mission Project, July 21-22: Every July, First Presbyterian Church of South St. Paul (535 20th Ave. North, South St. Paul, 55075) becomes a homeless shelter for families for the entire month through Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul's Project Home. Our church will be the volunteer host once again this year for two evening and overnight shifts:

- Friday, July 21 (5:30-8:30 pm), we are asking all EPC youth to sign up for this shift along with 1 or 2 adult volunteers.
- Friday, July 21 Overnight (8 pm – 9:30 am)
- Saturday, July 22 (5:30-8:30 pm)
- Saturday, July 22 Overnight (8 pm – 9:30 am)

This is a wonderful opportunity to help God's children in a very personal and hands on way, and the volunteers often say that they receive more than they gave. SIGN UP on the sheet in the Narthex or call the church office. For more information about what to expect as a volunteer with Project Home, or any other questions, contact Eleta Pierce ([eleta.pierce@gmail.com](mailto:eleta.pierce@gmail.com) or [612-719-0758](tel:612-719-0758)).

### **Prayers**

- Prayers of gratitude and guidance for the United States of America in the days after the celebration of our nation's birth on July 4.
- Prayers for safety and comfort for Eleta's cousin Mike Bowser, who has been missing from his home in South Carolina for over two weeks. Mike has struggled with drug addiction for a long time, so we pray for miracles of discovery and healing for Mike and his family.

We are a people who ask hard questions, trusting God and each other to lead us to answers and comfort. We are a people who pray for each other in the hope of healing. Let me remind you: Faith works. But it only works if you use it. Try it: ask your hard questions, pray for somebody today, take a risk and step out into the world when the Spirit gives you a nudge. Take one small step toward Love, and Love will respond with resounding joy and abundance and assurance. God is waiting with baited breath for you to open your heart! All peace is yours today! Pastor Phi